[27 cont.]

805 the like, but they have only ten months. They name them after terrestrial phenomena.

!Kai dsáa	It is cold (winter)	June
gama /éi	The grass burns	July-August
!hoá sori	It is hot	September-October
!u shē	The rain begins	November
ǂkhʊ̄ shē	The trees bloom	December
/hō //gāi	It is raining	January
!Khan //gai	The veldkost is coming up	February
!nâ -mâ	The veldkost is ripe	March
ao ré //kum //ká	The rain is stopping	April
!hoá //gai	The year is at an end	May

They reckon also from harvest to harvest.

221 The most beautiful time in the life of the Bushman is March and April. Even those who live on the farms hurry into the wilderness at that time. At certain places where there are many fruit trees, such as the marula, the friendly kin groups gather from far and wide. Here the young men look for brides, and there is much dancing, because at this time the women are not tired from seeking veldkost which is now to be found everywhere. Hunting yields less at this time, since the game has water and pasture everywhere.

Soon, however, the leaves fall, the bush forest becomes red and yellow, the migratory birds fly northward, and then the first [753] cold nights set in. Now the "Dsao" (spirits of sickness) come and bring sickness to the chest. At the end of May and the beginning of July [sic] the first frosts set in. Now the Bushmen move to the watering places, which stay open for a long time. The nights now [374] become torture. Burns on the skin of the chest and abdomen oc- [513] cur frequently, because the Bushmen now lie very close to the fire to sleep. Around this time, some of the kin groups already begin to suffer distress, because the game moves to other regions where there is still some pasture. In July the grass is finally dry [224] enough so that it can be set afire. Now the entire steppe burns. The young grass again attracts the game; hunting improves. The hot season is the worst period; the resting places of the game are quite uncertain, veldkost becomes increasingly scant, and the

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Toma the Leader

374 IT WAS very cold and the wind blew all night long, sweeping the haze from the sky and leaving the brilliant hard white moon. In the bitter hour before morning we were all too cold to sleep, so we got up, finding that the Bushmen had risen before us and were crouched shivering on the ground between the small fires, partly sheltered by the grass.

133 When the sun rose the air got a little warmer and shortly 137 after dawn we moved away from the camping-place, on toward Nama. We went through little forests, over slanting plains bordered with trees, past an outcrop of rock where I once had seen a leopard lying on his side, sunning his white belly, past a graceful tree which was one of the trees where the people of Nyae Nyae got their poison. At noon we reached Nama Pan.

Nama was a grassy field in the center of a scrub forest, and in the field was a great rock slide, basin-shaped, which now was filled with crystal water, and around the water was a beach of sand six inches wide. Around this beach the green grass grew, very dark, almost rotten with the water, the rich earth, and the sunlight.

. . .

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

when we looked at the pile we had, we judged that we had enough for the night, but we burned only one at a time to save them.

For a while, sitting at the fire, everyone was quite gay. The adults began to talk about food they had gathered and eaten and Toma's children asked me to tell them a story. "A true story," they said. Casting about in my mind for a story that would amuse them, I remembered a night when we were camped on our way to the Gikwe Bushmen in Bechuanaland and six lions had come into our camp. Someone in our party had shot at them and had wounded two of them, and then we had followed the wounded ones on foot through the darkness, a dangerous business, had finally found one and killed it, and had found the other one dead in the morning. I tried to say all this in Kung, but though I could understand quite a bit of it and could speak on some subjects, this time I found that my vocabulary was lacking; all I could say was "We killed two lions," a terse statement, and though the children were looking at me wide-eyed, I couldn't go on and had to get John to finish the story. "Ah," said the children when the story was told, not nearly as impressed as I had thought they would be, but then I myself had seen their father walk through a valley where several lions were roaring, at night, alone, armed only with a spear, depending on his wits for safety and on the fact that lions have a musky odor. He had been in our camp on one side of the valley when he had heard the lions roaring, and had slipped across among them in order to be with his wife and children, asleep on the other side.

Crooked Kwi, his wife, and his daughter had all turned away from the fire to warm their backs. They sat in a row, Kwi first, then the baby, then his wife. They were relaxed and they had let their heads tilt back to look at the sky. Crooked Kwi and his wife were very young, and, being one of the few

11: Marshall E-5 (1950-1955) 1958 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

FIREWOOD FOR CAMP is another prize to be sought from the veld. Here, two fine logs are being carried back to the *werft* for fuel. Besides fires for cooking, the !Kung need them at night for warmth, since temperatures after sunset often fall well below freezing. Each family shelter has its own fire.

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